

Ask

SHIP



LOCAL HELP FOR PEOPLE WITH MEDICARE

Q: I've almost hit the donut hole on my prescription drug coverage. What can I do to save money on my medicines until I'm out of the hole?

A: The prescription drug coverage gap (also known as the donut hole) is the period between your initial coverage limit and the catastrophic coverage threshold.

The coverage gap starts after you and your plan have spent a certain amount of money for covered drugs. All drug plans (Part D plans) are different. Check with your plan to find out when you could reach your coverage gap. Only about one in four do.

If and when you do reach your coverage gap, you won't have to pay out of pocket for all of your prescription costs while you are in the coverage gap as has been the case in past years. Once you are in the coverage gap, your plan will cover at least 7% of the cost of generic drugs. You will only pay 50% of the price for brand name drugs, but the full price will count toward your out-of-pocket spending.

This will help you get out of the coverage gap more quickly. You will still pay a dispensing fee for brand name prescriptions, and this fee is not discounted. The dispensing fee varies from pharmacy and plan.

Ways to Help Bridge the Gap

Apply for Extra Help

If you have Medicare and have limited income and resources, you may qualify for Extra Help paying for prescription drugs. Your annual income must be limited to \$16,335 for an individual or \$22,065 for a married couple living together, and your resources must be limited to \$12,640 for an individual or \$25,260 for a married couple living together. Find out more at www.ssa.gov, call 1-800-772-1213 or contact SHIP.

Switch to Generic

Consider switching to a generic drug that is the same as your name brand drug. Ask your doctor if there is a generic version of the medication.

Switch Brands

Consider switching the prescription with a lower cost brand name prescription. Ask your doctor if he or she would recommend an alternative to the prescription you currently take.

Stay in Your Network

All Part D Drug Plans have a pharmacy network. Typically you are required to go to a pharmacy in your network. Your spending can only be

tracked accurately when you use your network pharmacies.

Get your Prescriptions by Mail

Some pharmacy networks offer mail-order pharmacies with lower prices. Check if your plan offers prescriptions by mail.

Pharmaceutical Assistance Programs

Some pharmaceutical companies offer assistance programs for people enrolled in a Medicare drug plan who have reached the gap in coverage. To find out if a Pharmaceutical Assistance Program is offered by the manufacturer of your prescription, go to www.medicare.gov or contact the State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP).

Hoosier Rx

Hoosier Rx is Indiana's prescription drug plan for low-income seniors. HoosierRx does not consider your assets; it only considers your income. So if your yearly net income is \$16,485 or less for an individual or \$22,095 or less for a couple, you could receive help paying for your Medicare prescription premium. To apply call free of charge 1-866-267-4679.

For help with Medicare related issues, call SHIP for help at 1-800-452-4800, TTY 1-866-846-0139 or online at www.medicare.in.gov.

SHIP is a free, unbiased counseling program provided by the Indiana State Department of Insurance. To schedule an appointment with SHIP, call 1-800-452-4800, TTY 1-866-846-0139 or visit www.Medicare.IN.gov to find your local site.